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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 004297

SIPDIS

GENEVA FOR POLITICAL COUNSELOR JEFF DELAURENTIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SUBJECT LINE CHANGED)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/2014

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH MOD AND PEACE COMMISSIONER

REF: BOGOTA 04278

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood, reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) On April 27, Ambassador spoke to Minister of Defense Uribe and Peace Commissioner Restrepo about that day's presidential declaration on the peace process (reftel).

2. (C) Minister Uribe said that the declaration had been composed the day before and had been reviewed before issuance by himself, Minister of Interior and Justice Pretelt, Restrepo, and the military High Command. Although the President wrote most of the declaration himself, the message was a product of many hands. Ambassador told Restrepo that the Embassy strongly supported the declaration.

3. (C) Regarding the opening line on paramilitary threats against the President, Minister Uribe said they had good information that drug trafficker/paramilitary "Don Berna" and others were trying to organize an attempt on the President's life. Paramilitary attacks on the President are a new phenomenon and run counter to their rhetoric of "patriotism."

4. (C) Regarding the line that "those who wished to avoid extradition must demonstrate to the international community good faith and a purpose of amending their ways," Minister Uribe said it was not meant to open the door to evasion of extradition. Rather, the declaration was clear that extradition was not on the negotiating table and equally clear that it was the "international community" who must be convinced in any case where extradition was not granted. Extradition would remain an open possibility in all cases and, at least for the time being, the subject was closed.

5. (C) Minister Uribe commented that the declaration should serve to separate any paramilitaries interested in a genuine peace process from those, increasingly dominant, who are merely narco-terrorists trying to masquerade as political actors to get in on the benefits. He shared the view that Carlos Castano was dead and that the paramilitary movement was falling increasingly into purely narco-terrorist hands.

6. (C) Restrepo said that the declaration was not an ultimatum, in spite of the language saying "(if the paramilitaries) do not comply, the government will continue fighting them until they are done with." Restrepo said it was a "clarification," which would help him at the negotiating table, remove any doubts that his tough line was not also that of the President, and present the paramilitaries with a clear choice. He stressed the criteria of a real cease-fire, concentration of forces, and movement toward demobilization were key to progress.

7. (C) The declaration coincided, by chance, with a rally in Cali in favor of a "humanitarian exchange" of prisoners of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) for kidnap victims. The evening news in Colombia focused on the declaration's statement that the FARC would not be permitted to impose a humanitarian exchange by threat that would weaken the Government's policy of democratic security. A parade of family members of kidnap victims criticized the declaration.

WOOD